

Henri Lin, an eighth grader at Caddo Middle Magnet, was named student of the year. Henri is on the staff of his school newspaper, serves on the student council, is a member of the Builders Club, takes advanced piano and competed with the 2009 U.S. Junior Olympics fencing team.

Nicholas Allen Taylor, a senior at Byrd Math and Science Magnet High School, was named student of the year also. Nicholas is captain of Byrd's Quiz Bowl team, a member of the Mu Alpha Theta math honor society, and a member of the lacrosse team.

All three demonstrated outstanding academic leadership and communication skills and have bright futures ahead of them. Congratulations to all of them on this outstanding accomplishment.

SUPPORT MORTGAGE REFORM

(Mr. BACA asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute.)

Mr. BACA. Mr. Speaker, I stand in support of H.R. 1728, the Mortgage Reform and Anti-Predatory Lending Act.

This bill will ensure that mortgage lenders make loans that benefit consumers and prohibit them from steering the borrowers into high cost loans, and we know what an impact it has had on our Nation and many individuals who have lost their homes. In addition, this bill encourages the market to move back towards making fixed-rate, fully documented loans.

This legislation also prevents predatory and abusive lending practices, holds creditors responsible for loans they originated and protects tenants who rent homes that go into foreclosure.

I ask you to support this legislation on behalf of those that are right now on the verge of losing their homes and protect those tenants.

CONGRATULATING ARKANSAS TECH UNIVERSITY ON ITS CENTENNIAL ANNIVERSARY

(Mr. BOOZMAN asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. BOOZMAN. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to congratulate Arkansas Tech University on 100 years of academic excellence.

Arkansas Tech University was originally established as a Second District Agricultural College by the State legislature and one of four State agricultural schools in 1909. Arkansas Tech University is now one of the fastest-growing universities in the State of Arkansas and has established a reputation as a school that truly serves the Nation.

It is said that an education from Arkansas Tech University is the best of both worlds, big time technology and an education in a friendly, small-town setting.

The school excels in exposing its students to the technology of tomorrow and better preparing students for future endeavors. An excellent faculty and staff provide an outstanding education and educational opportunities.

I am proud to support this fine institution and look forward to the next 100 years of academic excellence.

RELEASING TERRORISTS FROM GUANTANAMO BAY

(Mr. WOLF asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. WOLF. Mr. Speaker, the Members of this institution ought to know that this administration and the Justice Department may be very close to releasing terrorists from Guantanamo Bay, the Uyghurs, out into the public, out around the country. And we are calling on the Justice Department to release any of the memos with regard to who these people are on individual cases. If they were members of a terrorist group, I believe the American people need to know.

This administration and Justice selectively released memos but will not tell the full story. So I urge all Members, unless you want them, these Uyghurs, terrorists from Guantanamo Bay, to move to your neighborhood, ask Attorney General Eric Holder, release all this classified information so the American people can know what we are about ready to face.

ANNOUNCEMENT BY THE SPEAKER PRO TEMPORE

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Persons in the gallery are not to express approval or disapproval of speeches on the floor.

ENFORCE IMMIGRATION LAWS

(Mr. SMITH of Texas asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. SMITH of Texas. Mr. Speaker, when Arizona Governor Janet Napolitano was nominated to be Homeland Security Secretary, her record showed that she often opposed enforcing immigration laws. So it's not entirely a surprise that she recently told CNN's John King that illegally "crossing the border is not a crime per se. It is civil."

That's just plain wrong.

It is a violation of the criminal code to enter our country illegally. The law has been in effect for decades, and it has been codified in its current form since 1991.

The Obama administration apparently doesn't intend to enforce some of our immigration laws. There are numerous examples, such as delays in implementing a requirement that Federal contractors use E-Verify to ensure that

illegal immigrants don't get Federal jobs.

It's hard to believe that this administration is not only weak when it comes to enforcing immigration laws, but also ignorant of immigration laws themselves.

INSIDIOUS TAX

(Mr. GOHMERT asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute.)

Mr. GOHMERT. Mr. Speaker, you know, there is an insidious tax out there, insidious because we tell the American people that they are not going to have to pay it, that we are going to put it on the greedy corporations.

Well, how do you think a corporation stays in business if it doesn't pass that on to the people, and they don't realize, they think somebody else is paying, and yet it comes right back to their feet?

Some of us talked to CEOs of industries that moved from here to China. Why did you move? I thought maybe the number one answer would be because of labor being cheaper. They said the best labor in the world is right here in the United States, but corporate taxes are less than half of what they are here in the United States, 17 percent there, 35 percent here.

Now we are told today by the administration they are going to hire hundreds of new IRS agents. Well, as JOHN FLEMING said this morning, now we know what it means by green jobs. They are going after your green.

ANNOUNCEMENT BY THE SPEAKER PRO TEMPORE

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to clause 8 of rule XX, the Chair will postpone further proceedings today on motions to suspend the rules on which a recorded vote or the yeas and nays are ordered, or on which the vote incurs objection under clause 6 of rule XX.

Record votes on postponed questions will be taken after 6:30 p.m. today.

RECOGNIZING THE SIGNIFICANCE OF CINCO DE MAYO

Mr. PAYNE. Mr. Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and agree to the resolution (H. Res. 230) recognizing the historical significance of the Mexican holiday of Cinco de Mayo, as amended.

The Clerk read the title of the resolution.

The text of the resolution is as follows:

H. RES. 230

Whereas May 5, or Cinco de Mayo in Spanish, is celebrated each year as a date of great importance by the Mexican and Mexican-American communities;

Whereas the Cinco de Mayo holiday commemorates May 5, 1862, the date on which the Battle of Puebla was fought by Mexicans who were struggling for their independence and freedom;

Whereas Cinco de Mayo has become one of Mexico's most famous national holidays and is celebrated annually by nearly all Mexicans and Mexican-Americans, north and south of the United States-Mexico border;

Whereas the Battle of Puebla was but one of the many battles that the courageous Mexican people won in their long and brave struggle for independence and freedom;

Whereas the French, confident that their battle-seasoned troops were far superior to the almost amateurish Mexican forces, expected little or no opposition from the Mexican army;

Whereas the French army, which had not experienced defeat against any of Europe's finest troops in over half a century, sustained a disastrous loss at the hands of an outnumbered, ill-equipped, and ragged, but highly spirited and courageous, Mexican force;

Whereas after three bloody assaults upon Puebla in which over a thousand gallant Frenchmen lost their lives, the French troops were finally defeated and driven back by the outnumbered Mexican troops;

Whereas the courageous and heroic spirit that Mexican General Zaragoza and his men displayed during this historic battle can never be forgotten;

Whereas many brave Mexicans willingly gave their lives for the causes of justice and freedom in the Battle of Puebla on Cinco de Mayo;

Whereas the sacrifice of the Mexican fighters was instrumental in keeping Mexico from falling under European domination;

Whereas the Cinco de Mayo holiday is not only the commemoration of the rout of the French troops at the town of Puebla in Mexico, but is also a celebration of the virtues of individual courage and patriotism of all Mexicans and Mexican-Americans who have fought for freedom and independence against foreign aggressors;

Whereas Cinco de Mayo serves as a reminder that the foundation of the United States is built by people from many nations and diverse cultures who are willing to fight and die for freedom;

Whereas Cinco de Mayo also serves as a reminder of the close spiritual and economic ties between the people of Mexico and the people of the United States, and is especially important for the people of the southwestern States where millions of Mexicans and Mexican-Americans make their homes;

Whereas in a larger sense Cinco de Mayo symbolizes the right of a free people to self-determination, just as Benito Juarez once said, "El respeto al derecho ajeno es la paz" ("The respect of other people's rights is peace"); and

Whereas many people celebrate during the entire week in which Cinco de Mayo falls: Now, therefore, be it

Resolved, That the House of Representatives recognizes the historical struggle for independence and freedom of the Mexican people and requests the President to issue a proclamation recognizing that struggle and the importance of Cinco de Mayo.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to the rule, the gentleman from New Jersey (Mr. PAYNE) and the gentleman from Arkansas (Mr. BOOZMAN) each will control 20 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentleman from New Jersey.

GENERAL LEAVE

Mr. PAYNE. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that all Members may have 5 legislative days to revise and extend their remarks and include extraneous material on the resolution under consideration

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Is there objection to the request of the gentleman from New Jersey?

There was no objection.

Mr. PAYNE. Mr. Speaker, I rise in strong support of this resolution and yield myself as much time as I may consume.

Let me begin by thanking our colleague from the great State of California, JOE BACA, for introducing this resolution.

H. Res. 230 recognizes the historical struggle for independence and freedom of the Mexican people and requests that the President issue a proclamation recognizing that struggle and the importance of Cinco de Mayo. This is a celebration we should all join in.

Cinco de Mayo commemorates May 5, 1862, on which the Battle of Puebla was fought by Mexicans who were struggling for their independence and freedom, along with their comrades and against the French soldiers.

This is a celebration of the virtues, courage and patriotism of all Mexicans and a point of pride for Mexican Americans, who have fought for freedom against foreign forces. Cinco de Mayo has become one of Mexico's most famous national holidays. It is a unique reminder that both Mexicans and Mexican Americans, north and south of the United States-Mexico border, observe in honor.

Grand celebrations take place in cities and towns all across the United States of America, the biggest being in western and southwestern cities such as Los Angeles. Festivities often include sporting events, parades, mariachi music, Mexican food and dancing. Sometimes the celebration goes on for weeks.

□ 1415

In a larger sense, Cinco de Mayo serves as a reminder to all Americans that the foundation of our great country was built by people from many nations with diverse cultural backgrounds who were willing to fight and to die for their freedom.

Cinco de Mayo can be understood both as a moment to celebrate the significant Mexican roots that have grown in the United States, as well as to symbolize more generally the right of all people to self-determination. It was a valiant struggle. They fought brilliantly. We urge our colleagues to support this resolution.

Mr. Speaker, I certainly at this time reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. BOOZMAN. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

This Tuesday marks Cinco de Mayo, a regional holiday in Mexico that commemorates Mexico's unlikely defeat of French forces at the Battle of Puebla on May 5, 1862. For generations, however, Cinco de Mayo has also been recognized throughout the United States.

The strong ties between our two nations are demonstrated around the country as family and friends join together to celebrate Mexico's culture

and experiences. Through efforts like the Merida Initiative and NAFTA, these ties continue to grow—only stronger.

Our mutual commitment to democracy and security in the region will prove increasingly important as some in the hemisphere work to advance their illicit agendas. Already, we have seen the transnational impact of the drug cartels and organized crime groups operating in Mexico. Joint efforts by our countries to thwart criminal activities within Mexico have sent these criminals north into the United States and south into Central America.

We must continue to work with our democratic partners and allies to present a united front against those who pose a threat to U.S. interests, security, and values.

So, as many throughout the United States and Mexico celebrate Cinco de Mayo this week, I hope that they are reminded not only of Mexico's proud past, but also of her ongoing shared commitment to independence, democracy, and security.

I thank Congressman BACA for introducing this timely resolution.

I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. PAYNE. I yield 5 minutes to the sponsor of the resolution, the gentleman from California (Mr. BACA).

Mr. BACA. First of all, I would like to thank the Congressman from New Jersey for his leadership on bringing this resolution, and also as the chair of the Subcommittee on Africa. I would like to thank the gentleman from Arkansas for bringing up the resolution that is important to a lot of us. Also, I would like to thank the ranking members; the ranking member of the Foreign Affairs Committee, HOWARD BERMAN, and then, of course, Ms. ROSELEHTINEN, as well, for their leadership and support in bringing this bipartisan effort to the floor.

I rise today in support of H. Res. 230, a resolution recognizing the historical significance of the Mexican holiday of Cinco de Mayo. This resolution recognizes the Cinco de Mayo holiday, which honors the spirit and the courage of the Mexican people involved in the Battle of Puebla on May 5, 1862.

In that battle, General Ignacio Zaragoza led the Mexican forces against the well-trained French Army, which vastly outnumbered the Mexicans. After only 4 hours, General Ignacio Zaragoza was able to claim victory. As a result of General Zaragoza's tremendous victory, the French foreign forces sustained heavy losses and were forced to withdraw from the area.

Along with Mexican Independence Day on September 16, Cinco de Mayo has become a time to celebrate Mexican heritage and culture with pride and dignity. While Cinco de Mayo commemorates the Mexican Army's victory over the French in this battle, it was one of many battles that the Mexican people won in the long and brave struggle for independence and freedom. And this is what they fight for today in comprehensive immigration.

Today, Cinco de Mayo is celebrated not only in recognition of the defeat of the French Army, but it also celebrates the virtues of individual courage and patriotism of all Mexican Americans—all Mexicans who have fought for their freedom and independence. Today, we will also celebrate Cinco de Mayo in the White House with President Obama.

However, it also serves as a reminder to all of the wonderful culture and characteristics that Latinos have brought to this country. I am an example in terms of what I am wearing right now.

Latinos are the fastest-growing minority population in this country, accounting for over 45 million people—49 million, if you include Puerto Rico. It represents about 17 percent of the total population.

The contributions made by Latinos to our American culture are countless—ranging from business, to art, to sports, to science, you name it. You see all kinds of figures everywhere around the United States.

Latinos have fought hard and are willing to make the ultimate sacrifice for this country. They have fought in every major war since the Revolutionary War. You have seen them fight for this country.

We have served with honor to defend this great country, and we will do that because we believe in it. That is why people come to the United States—for the freedom that we have.

Today, there are 30 Latino Members in the United States Congress—bipartisan. Also, we have Secretary Ken Salazar at the Department of the Interior, and Secretary Hilda Solis at the Department of Labor, who are both of Latino origin. This number points to what a driving force Latino communities have become in our country economically, socially, and politically.

Cinco de Mayo also serves as a reminder of our wonderful and longstanding relationship with our great neighbors to the south. Last year, over \$367.5 billion of goods were traded between the United States and Mexico. That makes Mexico our Nation's third leading trading partner.

Cinco de Mayo provides us with a great opportunity to look back at our own heritage as Americans—and I say as Americans. Our ancestors all came from diverse cultures and different homelands. Yet, they banded together to fight against oppression and tyranny, helping to form this great country that we have today.

While Latino culture has come a long way, we all must come together to make sure we recognize the inequities that exist right now in our communities, and that we deal with social and economic disadvantage that affect a lot of us.

My colleagues and I in the Congressional Hispanic Caucus share a common purpose—working to break down those walls and increase opportunities in areas such as education and health

care so that we all have equity, regardless of who we are, where we come from, for that same kind of justice and equality.

This past February, I was proud to give my support to the Recovery Act. As a great number of Hispanic families, as well as many other families, are struggling mightily during this recession, this act helps to create jobs for millions of Americans, invest in health care, education, and energy.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The time of the gentleman has expired.

Mr. PAYNE. I yield the gentleman 1 additional minute.

Mr. BACA. With that, I say let's support H. Res. 230, and ask for your support.

Mr. BOOZMAN. I continue to reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. PAYNE. I yield 3 minutes to the gentlewoman from California (Ms. WATSON).

Ms. WATSON. Mr. Speaker, I rise in support of House Resolution 230, introduced by my good friend and colleague, Representative JOE BACA, to recognize the historical significance of the widely celebrated Mexican holiday, Cinco de Mayo.

On May 5, 1862, while outnumbered almost two to one at the Battle of Puebla, Mexican General Ignacio Zaragoza Seguín led the Mexican Army and defeated a much larger and well-equipped French Army that had not been defeated in nearly five decades.

The battle would also prove to be significant because this would mark the last time an army from a foreign country invaded the Americas.

As many of you know, this holiday is not only commemorated in the United States and Mexico, but brings together cultures from all over the world to join in the celebration—even people in far-away lands such as the Island of Malta in the Mediterranean join in this festival.

The holiday is a chance for us to set aside our differences and support the Mexican people for the bravery shown by those men who fought at the Battle of Puebla 147 years ago.

I ask my colleagues to join me in recognizing the historical significance of Cinco de Mayo and the bravery shown that day in 1862.

Mr. BOOZMAN. I continue to reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. PAYNE. It is my pleasure to yield 1 minute to the gentleman from Puerto Rico (Mr. PIERLUISI).

Mr. PIERLUISI. I rise today in strong support of House Resolution 230, which has been introduced by my friend and colleague, Mr. BACA, and recognizes the historical significance of Cinco de Mayo.

For the people of Mexico, Cinco de Mayo is an important symbol of freedom, liberty, and self-determination. In our country, Cinco de Mayo is a celebration of the rich history and culture that Mexican Americans have brought to the United States.

Hispanics are the fastest-growing minority group in the United States.

There are 30 Hispanic Members of Congress, including many Mexican Americans, representing constituencies from all around the country.

Tomorrow, millions of Americans will join our neighbors to the south in celebrating Cinco de Mayo. This day serves as an important reminder of Mexico's proud history and of the many contributions that Mexican Americans have made to this country.

I urge my colleagues to help recognize Cinco de Mayo, and to support House Resolution 230.

Mr. BOOZMAN. I continue to reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. PAYNE. At this time I yield 10 minutes to the gentleman from American Samoa (Mr. FALÉOMAVAEGA).

Mr. FALÉOMAVAEGA. I do want to thank my good friend and colleague, the gentleman from New Jersey, as our distinguished chairman also of our House Foreign Affairs Subcommittee on Africa and Global Health.

Mr. Speaker, I rise today in support of House Resolution 230, to recognize the historical significance of the Mexican history of Cinco de Mayo. I commend my colleague, the gentleman from California, for introducing this legislation, as it truly does serve as a reminder that all the people of our great Nation, regardless of their race, color, or even gender, have enriched our diversity in our cultures and are worthy of respect as a Nation.

Mr. Speaker, Cinco de Mayo commemorates the battle of Puebla. On May 5, 1862, outnumbered and outgunned Mexican forces, determined to protect their land, successfully defended the town of Puebla against French soldiers and its transferred ruler by the name of Ferdinand Maximilian, who was an archduke from Austria and a puppet of Emperor Napoleon III of France.

For Mexico, this day has come to represent a symbol of Mexican unity and patriotism in the history of Mexico. It is a celebration of the virtues of individual courage and patriotism of all Mexicans and Mexican Americans whose ancestors are from Mexico and are part of the rich diversity of our Nation.

It also serves as a reminder of the cultural, spiritual, and economic ties between the people of Mexico and our great country.

Mr. Speaker, I want to share with my colleagues the life and history of a particular leader who, in my humble opinion, is the greatest hero in Mexico's history—a true statesman whose name is inextricably linked with the name Cinco de Mayo. His name is Don Benito Juárez, President of Mexico from 1862 to 1863, and 1867 to 1872.

□ 1430

President Juárez led the Mexican people in their fight for independence during this crucial period of their history. President Juárez was the first Mexican President of indigenous Indian descent—indigenous Indian descent.

His parents were members of the Zapotec tribe, prevalent in the provinces of the State of Oaxaca in Mexico. An orphan at age 3, young Benito Juarez worked in the cornfields and as a shepherd until the age of 12. When he went to Oaxaca City at the age of 13 to attend school, he could not read, could not write or couldn't even speak Spanish. He was adopted by lay members of the Franciscan Order who taught the young Juarez reading, writing, arithmetic and Spanish grammar. He later entered the Franciscan seminary in Oaxaca and studied Aquinas and other great Catholic philosophers, eventually turning his attention instead to the study of law. President Juarez was educated in the law in preparation for a political career.

Mr. Speaker, in his first political position as a city councilman, he was noted as a strong defender of indigenous Indian rights. He participated in the revolutionary overthrow of Santa Anna in 1855, becoming the minister of justice and instituting reforms that were embodied in the constitution of 1857. During the Reform War of 1858 to 1861, President Juarez led the liberals against the conservative faction of Mexico's Government. The liberals succeeded only through popular support and the unwavering determination of President Juarez, and he was elected President in 1861.

Mr. Speaker, to fully understand the quality of the leadership of Mexico at the time in the person of President Don Benito Juarez, one can compare him to, arguably perhaps, the greatest President in our own country's history, President Abraham Lincoln. Both leaders, in fact, presided over their countries in times of crisis, demonstrating great courage and perseverance in the fight for freedom. Both grew up in poverty and studied law. Both fought against bigotry and racism. In fact, President Lincoln and President Juarez were contemporaries who held each other in high regard. In fact, in 1858, upon hearing of Juarez's struggles in Mexico, President Lincoln sent him an encouraging message expressing hope "for the liberty of your government and its people." Even in the midst of our own Civil War, President Lincoln provided arms and munitions to President Juarez to support the Mexican people in their fight against France. When the U.S. Confederacy sent an emissary to Mexico to enlist support for their cause, President Juarez jailed the man for 30 days before sending him away, a clear sign of support for President Lincoln's cause at the time.

Mr. Speaker, today, the United States and Mexico share close ties. We also share the ideals of freedom and democracy. Because of our shared values and the tremendous contributions made by Mexican Americans, I think it is fitting and most proper for us in Congress to recognize the historical struggle of the Mexican people for independence against French colonial rule.

It is ironic, Mr. Speaker, that we have the gentleman by the name of Lafayette whose portrait is right over here who came here as a French patriot to help us fight against British colonialism, and the only foreigner here with the patriot right next to our Founding Father, George Washington. It is ironic that in the history of Mexico, Napoleon, being the ruler that he was, sent Maximilian to continue French colonial rule in Mexico, and so now we had to kick the French out in order to give the Mexican people their freedom.

Again I thank the gentleman from California, former chairman of the Congressional Hispanic Caucus, my good friend, for his leadership and initiative for introducing this bill.

I urge my colleagues to support this legislation.

Mr. LARSON of Connecticut. Mr. Speaker, I rise today in strong support of H. Res. 230, resolution honoring the significance and impact of Cinco de Mayo. I would like to begin by applauding the efforts and leadership of the author of the resolution, Congressman JOE BACA, as well as the rest of my colleagues in the Congressional Hispanic Caucus for bringing this bill before us today.

Mr. Speaker, since 1862 the holiday has traditionally commemorated the victory of a poorly armed Mexican militia over a larger, better equipped French army at the Battle of Puebla. Today, however, Cinco de Mayo in the United States has become a celebration of Hispanic heritage not unlike Saint Patrick's Day for Irish-Americans.

To be sure, Mr. Speaker, Irish-Americans and Hispanic-Americans have much in common. We are bound together by Catholic, working-class experiences. Our relatives came and continue to come to this country from largely rural, uneducated backgrounds. Our struggles were, are and continue to be twin struggles for equality, as well as political and cultural recognition.

From Bernardo de Gálvez to Admiral David Farragut to César Chávez, Hispanic-Americans have made significant contributions to the development of our nation. In just the last election, Latinos represented 9 percent of the electorate and provided the margin of victory in large swaths of the country, voting for President Obama by a margin larger than 2-to-1.

And because Hispanics constitute the majority of our nation's newest Americans, Madam Speaker, I cannot speak here without at least mentioning the subject of immigration. As Mr. Fareed Zakaria affirms in his acclaimed book, *The Post-American World*:

Foreign students and immigrants account for almost 50 percent of all science researchers in [our] country. In 2006 they received 40 percent of all PhDs. By 2010, 75 percent of all science PhDs in [our] country will be awarded to foreign students. When these graduates settle in the country, they create economic opportunity. Half of all Silicon Valley start-ups have one founder who is an immigrant or first generation American. The potential for a new burst of American productivity depends not on our education system or R&D spending, but on our immigration policies.

Immigrants are America's great strength. If we remain true to our history; if we remain the most open and flexible society the world; if we continue to absorb cultures, devour ideas and

feed off the energy of poor immigrants we will thrive. This is America's genius.

Hispanics are another great chapter in the larger history of our immigrant country. They make America more American.

I urge my colleagues to support this important resolution.

Ms. JACKSON-LEE of Texas. Mr. Speaker, I rise today in support of H. Res. 230 "Recognizing the historical significance of the Mexican holiday of Cinco de Mayo" and I would like to thank my colleague Representative BACA for introducing this resolution in the House.

May 5, or Cinco de Mayo in Spanish, is celebrated each year as a date of great importance by the Mexican and Mexican-American communities. This holiday commemorates May 5, 1862, the date on which the Battle of Puebla was fought. However, Cinco de Mayo is not "an obligatory federal holiday" in Mexico, but rather a holiday that can be observed voluntarily.

Cinco de Mayo has become one of Mexico's most famous national holidays and is celebrated annually by many Mexicans and Mexican-Americans, north and south of the United States-Mexico border. In the United States, Cinco de Mayo has taken on significance beyond that in Mexico. The date is perhaps best recognized in the United States as a date to celebrate the culture and experiences of Americans of Mexican ancestry, much as St. Patrick's Day, Oktoberfest, and the Chinese New Year are used to celebrate those of Irish, German, and Chinese ancestry respectively. Similar to those holidays, Cinco de Mayo is observed by many Americans regardless of ethnic origin.

Cinco de Mayo is a regional holiday in Mexico, primarily celebrated in the state of Puebla, with some limited recognition in other parts of Mexico. The holiday commemorates the Mexican army's unlikely defeat of French forces at the Battle of Puebla on May 5, 1862, under the leadership of Mexican General Ignacio Zaragoza Seguín.

Cinco de Mayo's history has its roots in the French Occupation of Mexico. The French occupation took shape in the aftermath of the Mexican-American War of 1846-48. With this war, Mexico entered a period of national crisis during the 1850's. Years of not only fighting the Americans but also a civil war, had left Mexico devastated and bankrupt. On July 17, 1861, President Benito Juarez issued a moratorium in which all foreign debt payments would be suspended for a brief period of two years, with the promise that after this period, payments would resume.

The English, Spanish and French refused to allow President Juarez to do this, and instead decided to invade Mexico and get payments by whatever means necessary. The Spanish and English eventually withdrew, but the French refused to leave. Their intention was to create an Empire in Mexico under Napoleon III.

The French, confident that their battle-seasoned troops were far superior to the almost amateurish Mexican forces, expected little or no opposition from the Mexican army. The French army, which had not experienced defeat against any of Europe's finest troops in over half a century, sustained a disastrous loss at the hands of an outnumbered, ill-equipped, and ragged, but highly spirited and courageous, Mexican force.

After three bloody assaults upon Puebla in which over a thousand gallant Frenchmen lost their lives, the French troops were finally defeated and driven back by the outnumbered Mexican troops. Although the Mexican army was victorious over the French at Puebla, the victory only delayed the French invasion on Mexico City; a year later, the French occupied Mexico. The courageous and heroic spirit that Mexican General Zaragoza and his men displayed during this historic battle can never be forgotten.

While Cinco de Mayo has limited significance nationwide in Mexico, the date is observed in the United States and other locations around the world as a celebration of Mexican heritage and pride. However, a common misconception in the United States is that Cinco de Mayo is Mexico's Independence Day, which actually is September 16, the most important national patriotic holiday in Mexico. The Cinco de Mayo holiday is not only the commemoration of the rout of the French troops at the town of Puebla in Mexico, but is also a celebration of the virtues of individual courage and patriotism, which all Americans can appreciate. Cinco de Mayo also serves as a reminder of the close spiritual and economic ties between the people of Mexico and the people of the United States, and is especially important for the people of the southwestern States where millions of Mexicans and Mexican-Americans make their homes. In a larger sense Cinco de Mayo symbolizes the right of a free people to self-determination and should be recognized and honored by this Congress.

Mr. CALVERT. Mr. Speaker, as a native of southern California, Cinco de Mayo celebrations have been a part of my life as long as I can remember. It is a day to celebrate our southern neighbors and the cause of Mexican independence. The historic battle at Puebla, Mexico on the fifth of May, 1862, is a David versus Goliath story that demonstrates that man can overcome any obstacle in the pursuit of freedom. On Cinco de Mayo we remember the brave stand at Puebla and we celebrate the cause of freedom around the world.

Mr. BOOZMAN. I want to thank Mr. BACA for bringing this forward, and I urge my colleagues to support it, and I yield back the balance of my time.

Mr. PAYNE. I yield back the balance of my time.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The question is on the motion offered by the gentleman from New Jersey (Mr. PAYNE) that the House suspend the rules and agree to the resolution, H. Res. 230, as amended.

The question was taken.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. In the opinion of the Chair, two-thirds being in the affirmative, the ayes have it.

Mr. PAYNE. Mr. Speaker, on that I demand the yeas and nays.

The yeas and nays were ordered.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to clause 8 of rule XX and the Chair's prior announcement, further proceedings on this motion will be postponed.

RECOGNIZING THE 61ST ANNIVERSARY OF THE INDEPENDENCE OF ISRAEL

Mr. PAYNE. Mr. Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and agree to the con-

current resolution (H. Con. Res. 111) recognizing the 61st anniversary of the independence of the State of Israel, as amended.

The Clerk read the title of the concurrent resolution.

The text of the concurrent resolution is as follows:

H. CON. RES. 111

Whereas on May 14, 1948, the State of Israel declared its independence;

Whereas the United States was one of the first nations to recognize Israel, only 11 minutes after its creation;

Whereas Israel has provided the opportunity for Jews from all over the world to reestablish their ancient homeland;

Whereas Israel is home to many religious sites sacred to Judaism, Christianity, and Islam;

Whereas Israel provided a refuge to Jews who survived the unprecedented horrors of the Holocaust;

Whereas the people of Israel have established a pluralistic democracy which includes the freedoms cherished by the people of the United States, including freedom of speech, freedom of religion, freedom of association, freedom of the press, and government by the consent of the governed;

Whereas Israel continues to serve as a shining model of democratic values by regularly holding free and fair elections, promoting the free exchange of ideas, and vigorously exercising in its Parliament, the Knesset, a democratic government that is fully representative of its citizens;

Whereas Israel has bravely defended itself from terrorist and military attacks repeatedly since independence;

Whereas the rocket attacks that have occurred in Israel in recent years have caused hundreds of casualties and have destroyed homes, schools, buildings, roads, power lines, and other significant infrastructure;

Whereas Israel has signed landmark peace treaties and successfully established peaceful bilateral relations with neighboring Egypt and Jordan;

Whereas despite the deaths of over 1,000 innocent Israelis over the last several years at the hands of murderous, suicide bombers and other terrorists, the people of Israel continue to seek peace with their Palestinian neighbors;

Whereas Iran, which rejects Israel's right to exist as a nation, is a continued threat to Israel's safety and security, both through its support of terrorist groups like Hamas and Hezbollah and through its ongoing efforts to acquire nuclear weapons;

Whereas the United States and Israel enjoy a strategic partnership based on shared democratic values, friendship, and respect;

Whereas the people of the United States share an affinity with the people of Israel and view Israel as a strong and trusted ally;

Whereas Israel has made significant global contributions in the fields of science, medicine, and technology; and

Whereas Israel's Independence Day on the Jewish calendar coincides this year with April 29, 2009: Now, therefore, be it

Resolved by the House of Representatives (the Senate concurring), That Congress—

(1) recognizes the independence of the State of Israel as a significant event in providing refuge and a national homeland for the Jewish people and in establishing a democracy in the Middle East;

(2) commends the bipartisan commitment of all United States administrations and United States Congresses since 1948 to stand by Israel and work for its security and well-being;

(3) congratulates the United States and Israel for the strengthening of bilateral rela-

tions in recent years in the fields of defense, diplomacy, and homeland security, and encourages both nations to continue their cooperation in resolving future mutual challenges; and

(4) extends warm congratulations and best wishes to the people of Israel as they celebrate the 61st anniversary of Israel's independence.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to the rule, the gentleman from New Jersey (Mr. PAYNE) and the gentleman from Arkansas (Mr. BOOZMAN) each will control 20 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentleman from New Jersey.

GENERAL LEAVE

Mr. PAYNE. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that all Members have 5 legislative days to revise and extend their remarks and include extraneous material on the resolution under consideration.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Is there objection to the request of the gentleman from New Jersey?

There was no objection.

Mr. PAYNE. Mr. Speaker, I rise in support of H. Con. Res. 111, recognizing the 61st anniversary of the independence of the State of Israel, and yield myself as much time as I may consume.

Since its founding 61 years ago, the modern State of Israel has been a strong ally of the United States, Israel has established itself as a dynamic, pluralistic and democratic nation with a booming economy, a thriving culture and intellectual life. Contemporary Israelis have contributed to world civilizations as scholars, artists and educators, and Israeli citizens have been awarded the Nobel Prize. Israel is the home to many outstanding scientists, engineers, doctors, musicians and other hardworking people. This is an impressive record for a country of barely 7 million people.

Since Israel's founding, the United States has had no greater friend in the Middle East. The close bond is based on shared values, including a commitment to democracy and respect for human rights. The United States and Israel also share a common history as a nation of immigrants, many of whom fled persecution from other parts of the world. The United States and Israel have worked to welcome people in their borders.

Israel declared its independence on May 14, 1948, providing opportunity for Jews from all over the world to reestablish their ancient homeland. Israel remains the home of many religious sites which are sacred to Judaism, Christianity and Islam.

Israelis continue to serve as a model of democracy and democratic values by holding free and fair elections, promoting free and fair exchange of ideas, having open press, open media and vigorously exercising in its Parliament, the Knesset, a democratic government that is fully representative of all its civilians. As a matter of fact, in the Knesset, just about every small group may be represented, and it is considered to be for Israel, as compared to